



29th September, 2011

Attention: **Peter Thomas**
Manager, Development Assessment
Rajiv Shankar, Planner
Lane Cove Council
PO Box 20 Lane Cove
NSW 1595

Your ref: DA11/100

Dear Mr Thomas, Mr Shankar,

RE: Development Proposal 1–8 Nield Avenue, Greenwich.
SEPP 65 COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS,
response to additional information, Letter from Marchese Partners dated 26.09.2011.

I refer to my report of the 5th August and to the letter from the applicant planners and their architects in response to that report. I now refer also to the letter of the 5th September and to the additional information sent by the applicant on the matter of cross ventilation and sun access.

I have analysed the drawings and reached my own conclusions as to whether the units achieve solar access and cross ventilation. I have assumed that the skylights allow for cross ventilation and in most cases solar access, except where they will be clearly overshadowed by the building.

Cross ventilation

The following units are not considered to achieve adequate cross ventilation.

4.1.2, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 4.4.2, 5.2.2, 5.3.6, 5.3.5, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 4.5.2, 2.1.2, 3.1.2, 6.3.2, 5.4.2, 1.2.4, 1.2.2, 2.2.2, 2.0.6, 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.5, 3.2.6, 6.4.2, 6.5.4, 1.3.4, 2.3.2, 1.3.2, 2.2.4, 2.3.5, 6.5.2, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.2.5, 1.4.4, 2.4.6, 2.4.5, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 3.4.6, 3.4.5, 1.5.2, 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 3.5.1, 3.5.2.

This is a total of 52 out of 131 units, which is 39.7%. The Residential Flat Design Code recommends a maximum rule of thumb percentage of 40% non-cross ventilated apartments.

Solar access

According to the evidence presented, the following units will not receive the required amount of sun.



4.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.4, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 4.4.4, 5.3.6, 5.3.5, 4.5.4, 1.1.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 5.4.5, 5.4.4, 1.2.4, 3.2.5, 2.2.5, 3.2.6, 2.2.6, 5.5.4, 1.3.4, 2.3.6, 2.3.5, 3.3.6, 3.3.5, 1.4.4, 2.4.6, 2.4.5, 3.4.5, 3.4.6.

This is a total of 38 units out of 131. Which is 29%. The Residential Flat Design Code recommends a maximum rule of thumb of 30% units that do not receive a minimum of 3hrs direct sun between 9:00am and 3:00pm on the 21st June. The applicant has not provided 'view from sun' drawings that allow for easy checking of solar access. The numbers may vary with a more certain measurement.

Conclusion

Whilst the project probably just achieves the minimum rules of thumb for cross ventilation and solar access, there are, in my view, too many units that do not achieve adequate winter sun and too many units with inadequate ventilation, given that this is a large and relatively unencumbered site where numerous design strategies could have been employed to achieve a higher amenity outcome.

I wish to point out that the rules of thumb in the RFDC are not intended as a cut-off points, or controls. The applicant may quibble about one or two units here and there that may or may not allow them achieve the percentages recommended. Either way, the project may only just achieve the lowest standard.

I urge Lane Cove Council to increase residential density with higher quality development.

Tim Williams
Architect AIA



5th August, 2011

Attention: **Peter Thomas**
Manager, Development Assessment
Lane Cove Council
PO Box 20 Lane Cove
NSW 1595

Your ref: DA11/100

Dear Mr Thomas,

**RE: Development Proposal 1-8 Nield Avenue, Greenwich.
SEPP 65 COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

I refer to your letter of the 17th of June requesting my comment on the matter.

The following comments have been prepared based on the drawings and documents supplied by Council including:

- Drawings by Marchese Partners, DA 1.00-1.10, DA 3.01-03, DA 4.01-03, 6.01
- SEPP 65 Report by BBC consulting Planners May 2011 .
- SEE vol 1&2 by BBC consulting Planners
- Shadow diagrams by Ivolve Studios
- landscape plan and tree removal plan by Taylor Brammer May 2011
- survey plan by Rygate and West Feb 2011
- hydraulic drawings by SPPgroup issue March 2011

We take on face value the accuracy of all the documents given to us and rely on them to form our assessment.

We have visited the site.

DESIGN QUALITY PRINCIPLES

Part 2 of SEPP 65 sets out the following design quality principles as a guide to assess a residential flat development. The 'Residential Flat Design Code' (The Code) is referred to as an accepted guide as to how the principles are to be achieved.

1. Context

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Nominated Architect Timothy Williams NSW 5187 QLD 3966



Good design responds to and contributes to its context. Context can be defined as the key natural and built features of an area. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of a location's character or, in the case of precincts undergoing a transition, the desired future character as stated in Planning and design policies. New buildings will thereby contribute to the quality and identity of an area. (SEPP65)

The site is west of the Pacific Highway near the top of Gore Hill. It is located opposite the Gore Hill Cemetery and the old ABC Site. The area is characterised by apartment buildings that date from the 60s and 70s. Nield Avenue is a small cul-de-sac between 2 apartment buildings.

The Avenue descends rapidly from the Pacific Highway towards the West. It serves as the access road for approximately 8 individual dwellings. These dwellings could be described as being in a gully. The gully is very well vegetated with numerous tall trees and luxuriant undergrowth.

The land falls away from the Pacific Highway towards the south-west.

On the higher ground on either side of the gully, there are some residential apartment buildings and medium density unit developments.

Whilst the existing cul-de-sac with its leafy atmosphere has some charm, there is no denying that a site so close to a major transport corridor and surrounded already by apartment buildings could justifiably be considered for a high-density residential development.

A proposal, such as this, is in keeping with the desired future character of the area, and can contribute to the higher residential densities that are appropriate along major transport routes.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

2. Scale

Good design provides an appropriate scale in terms of the bulk and height that suits the scale of the street and the surrounding buildings.

Establishing an appropriate scale requires a considered response to the scale of existing development. In precincts undergoing a transition, proposed bulk and height needs to achieve the scale identified for the desired future character of the area. (SEPP65)

The site is a large one and therefore it is natural that a large development be proposed. The architects have observed the maximum height controls and have broken the development up into blocks that are not dissimilar in scale to the residential flat buildings that surround



the site. The fact that they are slightly down the hill from the bulk of them means that the scale of the proposal will not be out of place in this location. The scale of the development is in keeping with the desired future character of the R4 high-density residential zone.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

3. Built form

Good design achieves an appropriate built form for a site and the building's purpose, in terms of building alignments, proportions, building type and the manipulation of the building elements.

Appropriate built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscape and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook.(SEPP65)

The form of the building is governed by the height and setback requirements that apply to the site.

The building form has been broken up into some 5/6 blocks, which will reduce the apparent bulk of the proposal as a whole.

The proposal meets the objectives of the principle.

4. Density

Good design has a density appropriate for a site and its context, in terms of floor space yields (or number of units or residents)

Appropriate densities are sustainable and consistent with the existing density in an area or, in precincts undergoing a transition, are consistent with the stated desired future density. Sustainable densities respond to the regional context, availability of infrastructure, public transport, community facilities and environmental quality. (SEPP 65)

The number and mix of apartments is appropriate. This sort of density is consistent with the future desired density of the area.

The proposal meets with the objectives of this principle.

5. Resource, energy and water efficiency



Good design makes efficient use of natural resources, energy and water throughout its full life cycle, including construction. Sustainability is integral to the design process. Aspects include demolition of existing structures, recycling of materials, selection of appropriate and sustainable materials, adaptability and reuse of buildings, layouts and built form, passive solar design principles, efficient appliances and mechanical services, soil zones for vegetation and re-use of water. (SEPP65)

There is a commitment to the use of energy and water efficient appliances.
There is ample provision for water harvesting and re-use of grey water for watering and toilet flushing.

The project does not follow passive solar design principles however and this is discussed in Principle 7. Amenity

The proposal generally meets the objectives of this principle.

6. Landscape

Good design recognises that together landscape and buildings operate as an integrated and sustainable system, resulting in greater aesthetic quality and amenity for both occupants and the adjoining public domain.

Landscape design builds on the site's natural and cultural features in responsible and creative ways. It enhances the development's natural environment performance by coordinating water and soil management, solar access, microclimate, tree canopy and habitat values. It contributes to the positive image and contextual fit of development through respect for streetscape and neighbourhood character, or desired future character.

Landscape design should optimise usability, privacy and social opportunity, equitable access and respect for neighbours' amenity and provide for practical establishment and long-term management. (SEPP65)

The landscaping occurs in the setback zones. Whilst the building will appear from the exterior to be in a landscape setting, the landscape zones are more or less just a buffer to the neighbours or to the street and are not very useful as common areas.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

7. Amenity

Good design provides amenity through the physical, spatial and environmental quality of a development.



Optimising amenity requires appropriate room dimensions and shapes, access to sunlight, natural ventilation, visual and acoustic privacy, storage, indoor and outdoor space, efficient layouts and service areas, outlook and ease of access for all age groups and degrees of mobility. (SEPP65)

Cross ventilation

Contrary to the claims of the applicant, I have counted 79 of the 144 units that do not have what can be considered adequate cross ventilation. Only 43 % do. The rule of thumb in the RFDC is that a minimum of 60 % should be cross-ventilated.

Direct sun between 9:00am and 3:00pm on 22nd June.

The applicant has provided shadow impact drawings that show that no sun hits the south-west facades of the buildings between the hours required. In addition, the units that are below ground level on the north east of the building are overshadowed by the retaining walls and the buildings existing to the north-east. This means that at least 43 of the 144 units do not get the required sun or about 30% which is right on the maximum rule of thumb number of 30%.

However, most of these units have a southerly aspect only. The term Southerly is understood to mean south west and south East orientations as well. Whilst the proposal has no south facing apartments due to its orientation, the units on the south west side of the proposal are considered south facing under the RFDC. The maximum rule of thumb number is 10%. The proposal has around 30%.

The proposal allows for all mobility access via a lift that connects the courtyard level to the public path at Morven Gardens.

The proposal does not meet the objectives of this principle.

8. Safety and security

Good design optimises safety and security, both internal to the development and for the public domain. This is achieved by maximising overlooking of public and communal spaces while maintaining internal privacy, avoiding dark and non-visible areas, maximising activity on streets, providing clear, safe access points, providing quality public spaces that cater for desired recreational uses, providing lighting appropriate to the location and desired activities, and clear definition between public and private spaces. (SEPP65)

Aspects of safety and security appear to have been well handled in this scheme.

It would be important, however, to ensure ample lighting to the pedestrian entry off the public way along the North West side of the proposal.

The proposal meets with the objectives of the principle



9. Social dimensions

Good design responds to the social context and needs of the local community in terms of lifestyles, affordability and access to social facilities. New developments should optimise the provision of housing to suit the social mix and needs of the neighbourhood or, in the case of precincts undergoing transition, provide for the desired future community. (SEPP65)

The proposed mix of dwellings is appropriate to the area and should accommodate a range of occupants.

The proposal meets the objectives of this principle.

10. Aesthetics

Quality aesthetics require the appropriate composition of building elements, textures, materials and colours and reflect the use, internal design and structure of the development. Aesthetics should respond to the environment and context, particularly to desirable elements of the existing streetscape or, in precincts undergoing transition, contribute to the desired future character of the area. (SEPP65)

There is a limited amount of information provided to assess the aesthetic qualities of the proposal. The design is very simple and 'paired back' with crisp modernist lines and details. A coloured elevation shows a 'black beauty' coloured brickwork with grey or white rendered and painted areas. The whole effect will be quite cool and grey. The shady parts of the proposal could be rather sombre.

Some differentiation between the different buildings could be useful as the repetition of the same elements everywhere might be a little overwhelming.

The proposal generally meets the objectives of this principle.

Conclusion

In my view, the proposal fails to meet the objectives of the good design principle of Amenity.

There are too many south-facing units and too many units with inadequate ventilation.

Tim Williams
Architect AIA